# A Vindication OF OATHS AND SWEARING IN VVEIGHTY CASES.

As LAWFUL and USEFUL under

# The Gospel.

By JOHN CHENEY.

*I have sworn by my Self, the Word is gone out of my Mouth in Righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every Knee shall bow, every Tongue shall swear,* ISA. 45, 23.

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# *A Vindication of Oaths, and Swearing in weighty Cases, as lawful, &c.*

THAT it is lawful for Chriſtian people to ſwear, I ſhall firſt make good by poſitive proof, and then take off the arguments which are brought againſt it. It might ſeem neceſſarie and pertinent to define what an Oath is, and firſt to treat of the nature of it, and the ſeveral ſorts of oaths: but my purpoſe being only to write ſo much as may ſuffice for the conviction of the Quakers Errours, and the ſatisfaction and eſtabliſhment of wavering and doubtful ſouls in the truth, I ſhall only premiſe this as a groundwork to the enſuing proofs, and a kind of clue to guide for the opening and declaring of the truth in this point; that there be in ſpeech and communication by diſcourſe ſeveral ſteps or degrees towards a certainty and confirmation. And this hath been in uſe univerſally throughout all ages of the world, and in all places of mankind. The firſt and loweſt ſtep or degree is a bare and ſimple affirmation and negation, or pronouncement of the matter without more, as to ſay, The Lord hath ſent me, I am a Chriſtian, My name is *John*, I am going to ſuch place, I am not the man you take me to be. This I take to be the ſame with ſimple and bare yea and nay, ay and no, or yes and no, and to be the leaſt and loweſt meaſure of ſpeech tending to certifie the mind of him we ſpeak to. This is or ſhould be moſt ordinary and common with all perſons. I am ſure with all that have learned the right and true way of governing the tongue, and have the moſt tender and pure conſciences, this is moſt common and ordinary, and where this will ſuffice, more ſhould not be uſed.

2. It is more than bare yea and nay to ſay in deed, or in truth, or I do aſſure you, or I do not lye to you, you may believe me, I am in good earneſt, verily, and verily verily. Theſe in the uſe and conſtruction of all languages do differ from bare yea and nay, or a naked and ſimple affirmation and negation. We are not in diſcourſes to others to put in *indeed and intruth* at every ſentence; and at every ſpeech we

make to add *verily, verily.* Christ himself used these words but very sparingly, not always, nor frequently. An instance I may cite one for many, out of *Jerem.* 26. 14 15. *As for me, behold, I am in your hand: doe with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye* for certain, *that if ye put me to death, ye shall* surely *bring innocent blood upon your selves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you, to speak all these words in your ears.* Here are diverse words added for confirmation, and the setting on of the truth, *know ye for certain, surely, of a truth.* See 1 *Sam.* 8. 9 And so frequently up and down the Scriptures these words *of a truth* are used by all. 1 *Sam.* 21. 5. *Of a truth women have been kept from us.* Our Saviour says in his preaching, *I tell you of a truth, Luk.* 4 25. so *Luk.* 9. 27. *Luk.* 12. 44. *Luk.* 21. 3. The same you have by *St. Peter, Act.* 10. 34. and by all the Saints gathered together speaking in prayer to God, *Act.* 4. 27. see also *Dan.* 2. 47. *Mat.* 14. 33. And not this only, but God himself also frequently using words for confirmation, besides that Christ is God. *Jerem.* 31. 18. I have *surely* heard *Ephraim* bemoaning himself. *V.* 20. I will *surely* have mercy upon him, saith the Lord. 1 *Sam.* 30. 8. Pursue, for thou shall *surely* overtake them, and *without fail* recover all. *Gen.* 2. 17. God sayes to holy and spotless innocent *Adam, In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt* surely *dye. Gen.* 9. 5. Surely *your blood of your lives will I require. Judg.* 6. 16. *And the Lord said unto him,* Surely *I will be with thee.* And multitudes more of the same import the Scripture is full of. Now all these wayes of expression are a degree of confirmation, and are more than a simple yea and nay. And without all question such wayes of expression are lawful, the Quakers themselves not denying but practising and assenting to them. And yet we would not account it well done in any man always and in every of his speeches to use such words for the assuring of the truth to him he speaks. It would be great fault so to doe. These are not to be used without cause, though they be far short of an oath, or the highest degree of security and confirmation in speech.

3. Besides these there be also some other formes of speech, which yet are not accounted oaths, though some think that they are, and peradventure they may be. As, I protest, I call Heaven and Earth to witnesse, God is witness, I speak before God, I call God for a record upon my soul, My conscience bears me witness, God that knoweth all things knowes that I do not lye: And whether that of *Joseph* be one such, By the life of *Pharaoh* ye are spies, which some take to be an

oath,

oath, ſome not. So when we ſay, As I live, and as the Lord lives, and I make proteſtation for my ſelf, and This ſtone ſhall be witneſs unto you, leſt you deny your God; for it hath heard all the words which the Lord hath ſpoken to you, *Joſ.* 24. 27. *Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will ſpeak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth, Deut.* 32. 1. *Iſa.* 1. 2. *Jerem.* 2. 12. *I call Heaven and Earth to record againſt you this day, Deut.* 30. 19. Some of theſe expreſſions are generally taken to be an oath. It is certain they are more than yea and nay. As Saint *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 31. *I proteſt by your rejoycing in Chriſt.* 2 *Cor.* 1. 18. *As God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.* v. 23. *I call God for a record upon my ſoul.* This ſeems clearly to be an oath. *Rom* 1. 9. *God is my witneſs &c. that without ceaſing I make mention of you always in my prayers.* 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 10. *Ye are witneſſes, and God alſo.* 2 *Cor.* 11. 10. *As the truth of Chriſt is in me, Gal.* 1. 20. *Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.* 1 *Tim.* 5. 21. 2 *Tim.* 4. 1. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect Angels. Rom.* 9. 1. *I ſay the truth in Chriſt, I lie not; my conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt.*

4. The laſt and higheſt meaſure of confirmation in ſpeech is an oath, which regularly ſhould not be uſed where a leſſer meaſure of confirmation will ſerve. *Heb.* 6. 16. *Men verily ſwear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtrife.* An oath then is for confirmation, and certioration. And it is a confirmation by teſtimony and appeal to God as Judge of all, moſtly by ſpeech and uſe of the tongue: not that I exclude from ſwearing, ſuch as cannot ſpeak, I may ſwear by writing and external ſigns and indications known and ſo taken to that intent; but ſwearing by ſpeech is moſt common, and is an engaging of the credit and veracity of him that ſweareth for the truth of what is ſworn. So that an oath hath place but in ſuch things as depend upon teſtimony, and the ſpeakers credit and honeſty, and is not to be uſed in things purely ſciential and probable by demonſtration.

There is imprinted in the hearts of all men by nature a notion or belief that there is a God, & the leſs depraved that natural reaſon is, the clearer and ſtronger is this belief: and proportionable to this belief there is in all perſons Religion, which is nothing but an act of the heart or practical mind correſpondent to the conception & belief that is in the judgment, drawing along with it the affections, tongue & converſation, towards God or a Deity, by acknowledgement, honour, veneration and adoration, and ſuch worſhip, ſervice and obedience as the mind conceiveth to be acceptable

table to the ſupream and ſoveraign being. Idolaters, Paynims and falſe worſhippers believe a Deity and worſhip him, though corruptly and Idolatrouſly: they conceit it is right pleaſing to God, and ſo doe it, and reſt in it. *John* 4. 22. *Ye worſhip ye know not what.* *Act.* 17. 23. The Athenians perform'd their devotions, *to the unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you.* 1 *Cor.* 10. 20. *The things which the Gentiles ſacrifice, they ſacrifice to Devils and not to God.*

Now the eſtimation and reverence of an oath is taken from the eſteem and reverence which all the world hath of him that is called God, the ſupream and infinite Majeſty, whom the Heathens had learnt to call *optimus maximus.* For the nature of man will not ſuffer that there ſhould be no God. And ſuch power hath Religion in all mankind by the ingraven principles of good and evil in our minds by nature, that we account him a monſter among men that ſhall deny the being of God: and next to him, or as ill or worſe, do we account him that acknowledging the being of God, doth not adore and reverence and worſhip him either truly or corruptly. For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, *Mic.* 4. 5. He is in ſome ſort a worſe Atheiſt that believing a Deity, doth not at all worſhip or honour him by Piety or Religion. Hence both the original and reverence of oaths is deduced, all the world believing a God, & accounting Religion to be the higheſt & moſt ſacred thing in this world, and ſwearing to be ſome way or other an act of Religion, not ſo natural and eſſential as ſome parts and pieces of Religion, but yet a part of Religion, and juſtly conjoined with it and reckoned to it. And this might be evidenced by plenty of arguments from Scripture, reaſon, and human authority, and the unanimous ſuffrage of all writers, and all ſuch as have been worſhippers of God, whether truly or corruptly. I ſhall confine my ſelf to argument from Scripture, and the evidence of the thing it ſelf.

1. It appears from Scripture that ſwearing is ſacred, or a piece or ingredient in Religion, *Deut.* 6. 13. *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his name.* The ſame is repeated with advantage, *Deut.* 10. 20. *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, him ſhalt thou ſerve, and to him ſhalt thou cleave, and ſwear by his name.* *Iſa.* 19. 18. *In that day ſhall five Cities in the land of Egypt ſpeak the language of Canaan, and ſwear to the Lord of hoſts.* *Iſa.* 45. 23. *I have ſworn by my ſelf, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, that unto me every knee ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall ſwear,* compared with *Phil.* 2. 10, 11.

10,11.and *Rom.* 14. 11. In all theſe places it is evident, that ſwearing is accounted an act of Religion,and as it is uſual in other caſes by a figure of ſpeech to expreſs the whole by a part,ſo the Scripture taking ſwearing to be a ſacred thing, and a part of Religion, under this name comprehendeth the entire Religion and Service of the true God. And hence, *Zeph.* 1. 5. *The Lord threatens them that worſhip the hoſt of heaven upon the houſe tops, and them that worſhip, and that ſwear by the Lord, and by Malcham.* And *Iſa.* 48. 1. They are blamed which *ſwear by the Name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Iſrael, but not in truth.* And hitherto tend all thoſe Scriptures which do limit and appropriate ſwearing to the name of God, *Iſa.* 65. 16. *He that ſweareth ſhall ſwear by the God of truth, as he that bleſſeth himſelf in the earth, ſhall bleſſe himſelf in the God of truth. Joſ.* 23. 7,8. *Ye ſhall not come among theſe nations, nor make mention of the name of their Gods, nor cauſe to ſwear by them, neither ſerve them, nor bow your ſelves to them: but cleave unto the Lord your God. Jerem.* 12.16. *It ſhall come to paſſe if they will diligently learn the wayes of my people, to ſwear by my name, the Lord liveth (as they taught my people to ſwear by Baal) then ſhall they be built in the midſt of my people.* Hence it was the practice of Idolaters to ſwear *by the name of their Idols, Amos* 8. 14.

2. It is apparent by reaſon, and by evidence from the thing it ſelf. For what is an oath? I ſwear by God, I call God for a record upon my ſoul, I believe that God is all-ſeeing, heart-ſearching, moſt true, moſt good, and Almighty, the rewarder of all truth and uprightneſs, and the revenger of all falſhood, deceit, and cozenage; and if this thing which I ſay and ſwear by his name be not true, if I ſhall not perform the thing which I promiſe, if I be not in all points true & ſincere in this my oath & aſſeveration before the Lord, then let me have no portion in God, then let the true and righteous God deal with me as a deceiver, and execute revenge upon me according to my defert for falſhood in ſwearing. This is an oath, out of which it is evident that it is a ſacred thing, and doth conſtitute a part of Religion, or moſt nearly pertaineth to it. For,

1. It doth contain an acknowledgment of Gods ſoveraignty and of all his Attributes. Every oath is vertually an acknowledgement of the ſupremacy of God, as alſo of his omniſcience, omnipreſence, omnipotency, holineſſe, veracity and juſtice, *Heb.* 6. 16. *For men verily ſwear by the greater*: and therefore when God makes promiſe, *becauſe he can ſwear by no greater, he ſwears by himſelf*, v. 13.

2. Every oath is vertually a prayer or imprecation, which is an act of worſhip

worſhip and honouring of God by adoration, calling upon his name. And we find *Jonathan*, when he would put the matter out of doubt to *David* by oath, he doth ſolemnly invoke God together with his oath, and joines imprecation with ſwearing, directing his matter to *David* even when he called upon God, 1 *Sam.* 20. 12, 13. In ſwearing we do virtually imprecate Gods vengeance upon ſoul and body, and all we have and are, if what we ſwear be not true, which is a moſt ſolemn and dreadful thing.

3. In every oath there is virtually an appeal to God, as to the ſupreameſt Judge, and an atteſtation of God as preſent to the truth of what we ſay. By which we decline the judicature of man, and do vertually acknowledge man to be a deficient creature, and no way to compare with God; and inaſmuch as all men know and believe God to be moſt true and truth it ſelf, and it cannot be that he ſhould atteſt or bear witneſſe to any untruth or falſity, we do therefore vouch him for our witneſſe; as who would ſay, if God himſelf were pleaſed to ſpeak, he would bear me witneſſe that I ſay truth. You will all truſt God; if God ſhould ſay it, you would believe it; as much as in me lyes I vouch the moſt true God for teſtimony to my words. So that in the intent of him that ſwears, if the thing ſworn be not true, God himſelf ſhould be guilty of lying and perjury, becauſe I do in effect make him my compurgator, and the ſame for ſubſtance as if God himſelf had proteſted what I had affirmed. And there being no higher Appeal than to God, hence it is that an Oath for confirmation is to men an end of all ſtrife, *Heb.* 6. 16. Not that *de eventu* it doth always ſo fall out, that an Oath ends all ſuit and ſtrife: For we ſometimes ſee the contrary; and ſome are of ſuch profligate conſciences that we will hardly truſt them upon their Oaths. But *de inſtituto & de fine rei*, an Oath in matters Teſtimonial and pertaining to Witneſs-bearing is the higheſt proof and confirmation that can be amongſt men, and all are to reſt in this deciſion, referring the further tryal of it to the Judicature of God the ſupreme Judge; ſaving that where it can be made out that the party hath committed Perjury, enquiry may be made, and being proved and convicted his Oath and teſtimony is to be made void, and whatſoever dependeth thereon is to be annulled and cancelled. And hence I think I may with ſome probability averr and affirm, that only in Heaven ſwearing is totally uſeleſs, there is no need of any Oath at all there, becauſe the Saints and Angels be perfectly and adequately perfect with the perfection of a Creature, and they cannot

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ſin, nor can they in the leaſt doubt of Gods everlaſting love and their continuance in that bleſſed eſtate to all eternity. They can have no diſtruſt at all, nor do they need any Oath or Aſſeveration or means of ſecurity and confirmation from God to them, or from them to God, or to each other. Gods Word and Oath recorded in the Scripture, as to the matter of it, remains everlaſtingly to be fulfilled, and the continuance of the bleſſed Angels and glorified Saints in glory is founded upon the verity and immutability of Gods promiſſory word, and ſo far there is faith in Heaven, and the glorified Spirits live by Faith. But this Faith is their perfection, and it is a Faith without all imperfection; alſo Eternity is a kind of *unum continuum nunc*, it is not meaſured by time, the everlaſting continuance of the bleſſed Spirits in glory is as a thing always preſent and exiſtent to them, they are as ſure of it as if they ſaw it, there is no proper ſucceſſion and meaſuring of hours and time in Eternity, there is therefore no uſe at all for an Oath there, becauſe an Oath is for confirmation, whereas they in Heaven are in the fulleſt fruition of glory, and their fruition it ſelf is higheſt and pureſt confirmation.

But ever ſince the creation of man upon earth there hath been place for an Oath, or ſolemn denunciation. For even in Paradiſe it ſelf, and while man was innocent and unfallen, the Lord was pleaſed to ſwear to him, or confirm him his word to him by more than a bare and ſimple commination. For thus we read, *Gen.* 2. 17. *Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it: For in the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely dye.* The words in the Original are, *Dying thou ſhalt dye*, which is an Hebraiſm or Phraſe proper to that Language, and importeth a degree of ſpeech more than bare *yea* and *nay*, or promiſing and threatning, and therefore is by our Tranſlators rendred *thou ſhalt ſurely dye.* And that which induceth me the more to this obſervation, is the form of Oath which God uſed to *Abraham*, ſet down *Gen.* 22. 16, 17. repeated *Heb.* 6. 14, 15. where God is ſaid to ſwear by himſelf, and the very form or manner of the Oath is expreſſed, *the Lord ſware by himſelf, ſaying, Bleſſing I will bleſs thee*; which ſeems to be the ſame manner of ſpeech with *Gen.* 2. 17. *Dying thou ſhalt dye*, and ſo by compariſon of places it ſeems to be if not an Oath yet a ſolemn denunciation, like to that in 1 *Sam.* 8. 9.

It may be you will object and ſay, That the Lords promiſing is ſwearing, and that when the Scripture relateth of God as ſwearing, it meaneth no more but his bare word, and no Oath, becauſe ſay ſome

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Gods Word or Promiſe is all one with his Oath. This I find among the Citations alledged by the Quakers in their Treatiſe of Oaths, *pag.* 137, 138.

To which I anſwer, That this may by no means be admitted without manifeſt wrong to the Scriptures, and great abſurdity in Reaſon. It is certain that God hath neither mouth nor tongue; when he ſpeaketh, it is by a formed voice and words: He himſelf is an incomprehenſible Eſſence and Perfection, and words do not agree to him. And therefore when he ſpeaketh, it is by a created voice, and by inſtruments and means formed thereunto; and as he ſpeaks by mans voice, ſo alſo in mans language. And to ſay that Gods bare word or ſimple promiſe in Scripture is his Oath, is againſt Scripture it ſelf, *Heb.* 7. 21. The Prieſts under the Law were made without an Oath, but Jeſus Chriſt with an Oath, *by him that ſaid unto him, The Lord ſware and will not repent.* And the Scripture doth clearly diſtinguiſh between Gods promiſe and his Oath, *Heb.* 6. 17, 18 *God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by an Oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for God to lye, we might have a ſtrong conſolation.* Theſe two immutable things are Gods promiſe and his Oath; they are two and not one: the Lord would not content himſelf to give his Saints a Promiſe only, but for their more abundant conſolation confirmed it with an Oath: all which conſidered with the context do prove that Gods Oath and his ſimple Promiſe are two diſtinct things. The Scripture aboundeth with Promiſes and Threatnings of God, but Gods ſwearing is more rare. For once ſwearing there are many and multitudes of promiſes, *By my ſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the Lord, Gen.* 22. 16. *Heb.* 6. 13, 17 *Heb.* 7. 21. *Pſal.* 10. 4. *Iſa.* 45. 23. *Jerem.* 49. 13. *Jerem.* 51. 14. *Amos* 6. 8. *Pſal* 89. 35. *Amos* 4. 2. 1 *Sam.* 3. 14. *Pſal.* 89. 3. *Luc.* 1. 73. *Iſa.* 14. 24. *Iſa.* 54. 9. *Iſa.* 62. 8. *Jerem.* 44. 26. *Amos* 8. 7. *Luk.* 1. 73. *Acts* 2. 30. *Pſal.* 132. 11. *Acts* 7. 17 *Heb.* 3. 11, 18. *Heb.* 4. 3. In all which places and a great many more expreſſe mention is made of the Lords oath and ſwearing. Now to ſay that all theſe mean no more but Gods bare and ſimple word, promiſe or threatning, is either to ſay that there is no difference betwen ſwearing and bare ſpeaking or affirming, or that Scripture ſpeaketh not conſonantly to it ſelf, nor in the common ſenſe and underſtanding of all men, and beareth us in hand with a falſity when it telleth us ſo often of Gods ſwearing. I believe that the Scripture meaneth as it ſaith, and would have us

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all ſo to believe, and not to impoſe a meaning upon Scripture both falſe and abſurd. And if any ſhall ask how can God ſwear? by the ſame way that he can ſpeak, and ſimply affirm and deny, promiſe or threaten, and both alike. Up and down the Scripture we find God ſpeaking to us after the manner of men, and ſo we muſt interpret and underſtand, uſing all wayes of expreſſion, moſt frequently ſimple promiſing and threatning, oftentimes *ſurely*, and other forms of confirmation, and more rarely oathes and ſwearing, condeſcending to ſpeak to us men in our own language.

And this is my firſt argument for the lawfulneſs of an oath, Gods own example of ſwearing for more ſecurity and confirmation. And it ſeems to be a very ſtrong argument. For if the Lord moſt wiſe and good ſee it meet to ſwear to man, and conceive it a ſuitable expedient for mans debility and weakneſs, and a crutch or ſtay to his faith: how much more may there be required an oath from men? It is impoſſible that God ſhould lye or deceive. If he make but the moſt ſimple and naked promiſe or threatning, that is enough for his Majeſty: he is truth and faithfulneſs and juſtice and goodneſſe it ſelf, and he cannot in the leaſt be moved from performing what he ſayes, yet he ſees it convenient and profitable for mans help to confirm his word by oath, As I live, I ſwear by my holineſſe, by my excellencie, by my great name, I ſwear by my ſelf, which is to ſay, Let me be no God, let me have no truth, no holineſſe, or excellency in me, let me be challenged for a falſe God, and no credit at all given to me, if I ſhall not make good my word, and perform what I ſay. It is of his goodneſſe and ſuperabundant rich grace, that the Lord makes unto us promiſes; and it is yet from the more abundance of his grace that he confirms it with an oath: and as the Lord would not doe it if there were not cauſe; ſo being done, it gives us to underſtand that an oath as ſuch is not ſimply evil. For then it would be unbeſeeming his holineſs and infinite glory. If it were altogether ſinful to ſwear, how could the Lord ſwear? It is evident that an oath hath its reaſon and foundation in nature, and doth ſuppoſe ſome preexiſtent reaſon on our behalf, and therefore for our confirmation the Lord ſweareth, that there might be no room at all left for doubting. For if we will not truſt God upon his oath, we will not truſt him indeed, we are moſt incredulous wretches, and do in effect proclaim God to be a lyar, ſuch a one as is not to be truſted, 1 *John* 1. 10.

Perhaps you may object, there may be ſome ground or colour for an oath ſince the fall, becauſe of the great depravedneſs of our natures,

and groſs unbelief and hardneſs of heart: but *Adam* was perfect, and ſo there could be no uſe of an oath to him.

I do anſwer, that *Adam* had in ſome ſort imperfection in him, but he had no culpable imperfection in him. He was created ſinleſs, but not ſo free from falling into ſin, but that he might (as afterwards he did) fall into ſin; now as God ſaw it meet to give him a law to obſerve, and to back that law by a threatning, ſo he might ſee it convenient for *Adams* good and for more ſecurity and confirmation beſides the bare and ſimple threatning to uſe an aſſeveration or ſolemn denunciation for more ſecurity and certioration. *Surely if thou eat of this tree thou ſhall dye.* Take heed to thy ſelf, thou art not ſo beyond all poſſibility of falling, but that it is poſſible for thee to ſin, and if thou do at all ſin, *Verily thou ſhalt dye, Surely I will not ſpare to puniſh thee.* I do not contend that the words ſet down *Gen.* 2. 17. are an oath; and I think it beyond all doubt that they are more than a ſimple or naked threatning. And that's a a degree towards an oath. This was in Paradiſe, during mans eſtate of innocency: ſo that God is our chief pattern for ſwearing, and his example is a chief warrant, and it is apparently grounded in reaſon: and therefore I may warrantably ſay by way of Antitheſis to *W. Pen*, Treatiſe of oaths, *P.* 12. *Manente ratione legis, manet & lex.* The firſt oath, aſſeveration or proteſtation being upon reaſon and preexiſtent grounds, where there are the ſame grounds and reaſons there is the ſame uſe of an oath. And *à majori ad minus valet argumentum affirmative*, if there was uſe for an oath, aſſeveration, or ſolemn denunciation in Paradiſe during the ſtate of innocency, and that for more ſecurity and confirmation to *Adam*; much more do fallen ſinners need the oath of God for the help of our faith. And if we need the oath of God, do we not need the oath of man? or can it be that we can be more confident in man than in God? If an oath be any means of confirmation in its own nature and right uſe, as hath been evidenced that it is, and as the example of God, and conſtant uſe of all nations doth witneſs; then there can be no reaſon for the utter aboliſhment of oaths, while mankind is ſo impotent and defective as to need all ſuch helps and wayes as do any thing conduce to the ſettlement and confirmation of humane belief and perſwaſion whether towards God, or towards one another, in things teſtimonial and credential, ſuch as are not capable of confirmation any other way, ſave by teſtimony and affirmation on his part that ſpeaketh or aſſureth, and belief or giving credit by him that is to be aſſured.

Alſo

Alſo it may be noted out of the Scriptures of truth, that God himſelf ſwore to Jeſus Chriſt, *The Lord hath ſworn and will not repent, Thou art a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedech, Pſal.* 110. 4. compared with *Heb.* 7.16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. Where a compariſon is made of the Prieſthood of Chriſt, and the Prieſthood under the law, and the preeminence is given to Chriſt; and this among the reſt is added as a note of excellency in the Prieſthood of Chriſt which was not under the law, that Chriſt was made Prieſt with an oath, and the oath is ſet down, God the Father ſpeaking and ſwearing to Chriſt, *thou art a Prieſt for ever*. And hence the Scripture doth gather and make obſervation that the Prieſthood of Chriſt, and conſequently the Goſpel Covenant and diſpenſation was far more excellent and perfect than that of the Law.

And we are taught, *Heb.* 6. 17, 18. That Gods oath to the Heirs of promiſe was for confirmation ſake, and Jeſus Chriſt is the heir of all things, *Heb.* 1. 2. And it is agreed upon by all Divines that there was a peculiar covenant or tranſaction between God the Father and Jeſus Chriſt the mediator and Saviour of the world, diſtinct from all other Covenants between God and man, and between Chriſt the mediator and man. And the Scripture would not that this Covenant ſhould be wanting in excellencie and compleatneſs, but to be above the covenant of *Moſes* and the Levitical Prieſthood and adminiſtration of old, and therefore the Lord added an oath to the Covenant and Prieſthood of Chriſt, which was not in the other. Now this doth betoken and infer, 1. That an oath from God is a mark of glory and excellency, and did confer ſpecial dignity upon Chriſt and his Prieſthood. 2. That even in the prieſthood of Chriſt there was uſe for an oath, and that for confirmation. For I take that to be an end or reaſon common to all oaths to be for confirmation, *I have ſworn and will not repent, Thou art a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedech.* You will ask, to whom doth God intend and direct this oath for confirmation? And it is evident that the words are immediately and firſtly directed to Jeſus Chriſt, God ſpeaks to him, *I have ſworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Prieſt for ever.* If any ſhall further queſtion, what needeth Jeſus Chriſt any confirmation beſides his conſecration to the office of Mediator, his extraordinary unction, and Gods word of promiſe, and the wonderful hypoſtatical union of the two natures in the perſon of the Son of God? what needed an Oath? It was not for him but for others, the Heirs of promiſe, that this was added for confirmation. Jeſus Chriſt was impeccable, and had no defect at all, nor could in the leaſt doubt of Gods verity, and ſo there could be no uſe of an Oath as to him.

I ſhall anſwer, but with ſubmiſſion to others, and liberty of changing my mind, upon further ſtudy and enquiry, if need be. It was his own voluntary humility and condeſcenſion to mankind, together with his Fathers will and impoſition, that he became man, and took upon him the ſinleſs frailties of man, and became ſo near to us in all things, ſin excepted. And can you ſay it argues any more imperfection on Chriſts part, that God ſhould confirm his Prieſthood with an Oath, than that an Angel from Heaven ſhould be ſent to ſtrengthen him? *Luke* 22. 43. or that he ſhould pray with ſtrong crying and tears, and pray whole nights together, and be ignorant as man when the day of Judgment is? All theſe do argue that he was a man, and he could not be a man but he muſt needs have humane imperfections, but none that are in the leaſt ſinful, nor many of thoſe imperfections which be in us, and yet are not ſinful neither. Had there been no ſin, nakedneſs and innocency had been the beſt Covering and Garment: It will not therefore follow, that becauſe Jeſus Chriſt wore Garments, that he was not altogether innocent. Baptiſm and Circumciſion in the ordinary ſubjects and receivers did betoken filthineſs and impurity: but it will not thence follow, that Chriſt had any impurity or ſin becauſe he was Circumciſed and baptized. For it was his own voluntary ſubmiſſion, in concurrence with his Fathers will, which made thoſe Commands at all requiſite and neceſſary to him.

So concerning this matter of ſwearing, the Lord might confirm his Covenant to Chriſt by Oath, and this not be needleſs or ſuperfluous, nor yet Chriſt be imperfect. For the addition of an Oath is but in the predicament or ſeries of means, and Chriſt hereby as in other things might be an example to us, of giving juſt regard and eſteem to all means of Gods appointment, and to ſtoop our wiſdom to the wiſdom of God: And if the Lord ſhall ſay to Chriſt, I do make thee the Soveraign Prieſt and Saviour of the world, and for excellency to thee and thy miniſtration, and for the fulneſs and plerophory of confirmation, and to teſtifie my abundant love to thee and delight in thee, and the verity and immutability of my counſel, and for thine exceeding joy and ſupport in all thy undertaken work, as alſo for the benefit and conſolation of all thy Members the Heirs of Promiſe, I do confirm thy Prieſthood by my Oath, and ſwear to thee; If the Lord I ſay do thus, it behoves us to think that this is with good reaſon, and that an Oath may be uſeful to certain ends and intents, where the party ſworn to is altogether ſpotleſs and innocent. Jeſus Chriſt did not

not think himſelf to be above any means of Gods appointment and impoſition. *Wiſdom is juſtified of all her Children.* And Chriſt being the moſt abſolute Pattern and Child of Wiſdom did well approve and juſtifie the Lord in adding an Oath, and thereby confirming to him his Prieſthood, and the glory thereon depending for ever. All which makes for the uſe and reverence of an Oath.

*Object.* Some may ſay, *Becauſe God in Scripture hath frequently ſworn, may we therefore? May we make God our Example in all things, and imitate God in every thing he doth?*

*Anſw.* We are commanded in Scripture, *Be ye holy, for I am holy:* and, *Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.* We are not to imitate God in ſuch things as are incommunicable, and proper to God alone, as to make the world, to give Laws to the world, or to do things miraculous utterly above the power of Nature: We may not uſurp the place and authority of God, and attempt to be equal with him in any thing. But in ſuch things as God doth command, and propoſe unto us to imitate him in, as in the deteſtation and ſhunning of Vice, and in the practice of Vertue, ſuch things we may and muſt imitate God in, as in holineſs, uprightneſs, juſtice, goodneſs, truth, equity, innocency, and the like. Now ſwearing is one of thoſe things in which we may imitate God, and Gods practice herein is a warrant to us in weighty caſes to ſwear. For what is ſwearing in the ſum and upſhot of it, but appealing to God and the engaging of our credit, and the adventuring of all we have upon the verity of what we affirm? The truth is but one. A ſimple affirmation or negation is the matter of an Oath. I grant that a ſimple or naked affirmation and an Oath do differ: but in many things they agree, *magis & minus non variant ſpeciem.* For God to promiſe only, and for him to promiſe with an Oath, as to the thing promiſed both are the ſame, as to the promiſer both are the ſame, and as to him to whom the promiſe is made. The truth is but one in both. If the thing be falſe or feigned, the Oath cannot make it true or ſincere; if it be true and real, it is ſo without the Oath. Both ſwearing and not ſwearing depend upon the credit and veracity of the ſwearer.

You will grant that I may and muſt imitate God in ſaying and affirming the truth. And why may I not imitate God in confirming the truth? An Oath is nothing but the higheſt confirmation of truth by teſtimony and appeal. You will allow me more than barely to affirm or deny; you will allow me to ſay, Verily, Surely, Of a truth, I

proteſt,

proteſt, and the like; all which are a degree of confirmation. Now ſhew any ſubſtantial reaſon why it ſhould be lawful and a duty to confirm the truth in a firſt or ſecond degree, and ſimply unlawful to confirm it in a third or fourth degree.

We will ſuppoſe four degrees of confirming the truth. Suppoſe Verily to be one, Verily Verily twice ſaid to be two degrees; I proteſt, or I call Heaven and Earth to witneſs to be a confirmation in the third degree; and an Oath to be the fourth and utmoſt degree of all. All do grant it lawful to uſe the firſt and the ſecond degree; moſt, if not all, hold it lawful to confirm the truth in the third, and ſaving a very few, all think the fourth degree lawful.

Now if confirmation in the laſt degree were ſimply ſinful, then alſo the firſt and ſecond and third degree would be ſinful. For, every degree of ſin, is ſin; and if confirmation in the firſt, ſecond and third degree be lawful, the addition of a fourth degree cannot be unlawful in its own nature. Accidents and adventitious reſpects may make it unlawful, but in, and of, it ſelf it is lawful.

In teſtimony, or witneſs-bearing, the verity of the thing affirmed or denyed is the thing which both ſides ſtrive about. You would know if there be ſuch a place, or ſtate, as Hell beyond this Life. I tell you, ſaith God, that there is. All that you would be ſatisfied of is the truth of this point, if indeed there be a Hell. I do aſſure you, ſaith God, that there is, As verily as I am God there is, I confirm it to you by all the truth that is in me. This is the ſum of ſwearing, and what is there in all this vicious and unwarrantable to imitate?

*Arg.* 2. I bring this Argument to prove it lawful to ſwear. The ſum of all Gods Laws is, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and ſoul and ſtrength, and thy Neighbour as thy ſelf: to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. Now it is not againſt any of all theſe to ſwear, or take an Oath, in weighty caſes. Let it be ſhewn wherein I offend againſt God, mine own ſoul, or my Neighbours, by ſwearing? I do honour God by religious ſwearing, I do not in the leaſt detract from his glory, or contemn his attributes, but I acknowledge and adore the Name of God; neither do I wound mine own ſoul, or do any harm to my Neighbours. It is no offence to God to confirm the truth by a ſolemn invocation of his Name, and appealing to him for the witneſs and confirmation of it. I ſhall make this more plain by the following Argument.

*Arg.* 3. The cuſtome of all Nations ever ſince the World began, the

the practice of all Gods People and the Church of God to this very day doth prove that ſwearing is lawful, and of God. I ſhall run through the Old and New Teſtament, and confine my ſelf to them. We find *Abram*, the Father of the faithful, and the Friend of God, ſwearing, *Gen.* 14. 22. and ſwearing to *Abimelech*, *Gen.* 21. 22, 23, 24. and *Abimelech* to him: they ſware both of them, *v* 31. And hence it is plain that ſwearing was in uſe then, and great eſteem was had of it, and it was counted a ſacred and inviolable thing, becauſe *Abimelech* and *Phicol* his chief Captain ſued unto *Abraham* for a League or Covenant to be between them by Oath, as a chief means of ſecurity and confiding in one another. *Abraham* being in great care about a Wife for his Son, makes his Servant to ſwear to him, and the Servant did ſwear, *Gen.* 24. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. By this it appears that *Abraham* had inſtructed his Servants in the right uſe of an Oath, *Gen.* 18. 19. We find godly *Iſaak* treading in the ſteps of his worthy Father, and at the inſtance of *Abimelech*, with *Ahuzzath* one of his Friends, and *Phicol* his chief Captain, ſwearing to each other, with feaſting and gladneſs, *Gen.* 26. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. We find godly *Jacob* treading in the ſteps of his worthy Progenitors, vowing a Vow, and binding his Soul with the ſacred Cord of an Oath to God. For a Vow is a promiſſory Oath to God, *Gen.* 28. 20, 21, 22. We find him and his idolatrous Father-in Law and Unckle *Laban* making an Oath and Covenant to each other, *Gen.* 31. 44, 45, 46, 47, *&c.* And *Jacob* ſware by the fear of his Father *Iſaak*, *v.* 53. And when he came to dye he made his Son *Joſeph* to ſwear to him not to bury him in *Ægypt*, but to carry his Corps into *Canaan*, *Gen.* 47. 29, 30, 31. We find godly *Joſeph* treading likewiſe in the ſteps of his worthy Fathers, and taking an Oath of his Brethren that they ſhould carry his Bones with them out of *Ægypt*, *Gen.* 50. 24, 25. By theſe four Inſtances it appears that ſwearing was in uſe both with Idolaters and true Worſhippers of God in the firſt Ages of the World, many hundreds of years before the giving of the Law to *Moſes* at Mount *Sinai*.

As touching Gods People after their paſſing out of *Ægypt*, and during their abode in the Wilderneſs, there is no queſtion to be made but that Oaths and ſwearing lawful and approved of God were in uſe amongſt them. For God himſelf, it is not denyed, commanded and preſcribed them Oaths; and in ſundry caſes enjoined an Oath for the ending of Controverſies. After their paſſage over *Jordan*, and before they had conquered any conſiderable part of *Canaan*, *Joſhua* and

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the Elders of *Iſrael* bind themſelves by an Oath to the *Gibeonites*, at which the People were angry; but having laid upon them a ſolemn Oath, they durſt not go back, *Joſ.* 9. 15, 18, 19. And the breach of this Oath in King *Saul*'s time ſome hundreds of years after was puniſhed by God with three years Famine, and the ſlaughter of ſeven of *Saul*'s Sons, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1, 2, &c. 6, &c. And before this we find a ſolemn Oath paſſed between the good Spies and *Rahab* for the ſaving of her and her Kindred, ſhe being inſtant with them to ſwear for her greater ſecurity, and they ſware to her, *Joſ.* 2. 12, &c. By this it is plain what eſteem was had of Oaths, and in what uſe they were then. The two Tribes and an half being ſuſpected of a great Crime of revolting from God in building an Altar at *Jordan*, they clear themſelves by a kind of Oath or ſolemn Appeal to God, *Joſ.* 22. 22, &c. *Samſon*, one of the Lords Worthies, in jeopardy of his Life requiring of the Men of *Judah* an Oath that they would not fall upon him themſelves, *Judg.* 15. 12. We find *Joſhua* laying a Curſe or Adjuration upon the Man that ſhould build *Jericho*, *Joſ.* 6. 26. and the execution of this Curſe upon *Hiel* the *Bethelite* long after, 1 *King.* 16. 34. We read of *David* often ſwearing, 1 *Sam.* 20. 3. and moſt notable is the Oath and Covenant between him and *Jonathan*, both for matter and manner and ſolemnity, *v.* 12, &c. *v.* 16, 17, 42. They renew their Covenant, 1 *Sam.* 23. 18. *Saul* would needs have *David* ſwear to him, and he ſware to him, 1 *Sam.* 24 21, 22. Another time ſwearing, or ſomething like it, and that lawfully, 1 *Sam.* 26. 16. and ſwearing to *Bathſheba*, 1 *King.* 1. 13. and again upon his Death-bed ſwearing to her, *v.* 29, 30. *Pſ.* 119. 106. *I have ſworn and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* And *Pſ.* 132. 2, 3, 4, 5. He ſware unto the Lord and vowed unto the mighty God of *Jacob*, *Surely, I will not come into mine Houſe*, &c. *Solomon* in his Prayer to God at the Dedication of the Temple prayes, ſaying, *If any Man treſpaſs againſt his Neighbour, and an Oath be laid upon him to cauſe him to ſwear, and the Oath come before thine Altar in this Houſe; then hear thou in Heaven*, &c. 1 *King.* 8. 31, 32. 2 *Chr.* 6. 22, 23. The poor famiſhed and half-dead *Egyptian*, being in treaty with *David* for his Life, would needs have *David* to ſwear to him, 1 *Sam.* 11, &c. 15. Notable is the Oath and Covenant of King *Aſa* and all the People with him, approved by the Lords Prophet, and the Lords Countenance upon them, *They entred into a Covenant to ſeek the Lord God of their Fathers with all their heart, and with all their ſoul; and they ſware*

*unto*

*unto the Lord with a loud voice, and with ſhouting, and with Trumpets, and with Cornets; and all* Judah *rejoiced at the Oath, for they had ſworn with all their heart, and ſought him with their whole deſire, and he was found of them, and the Lord gave them reſt round about,* 2 *Chr.* 15. 12, 13, 14, 15. This is a moſt clear Teſtimony for ſwearing in the like caſe. The words of good *Obadiah* to *Elijah, As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no Nation or Kingdom, whither my Lord hath not ſent to ſeek thee, and when they ſaid he is not there, he took an Oath of the Nation and Kingdom, that they knew him not,* 1 *King.* 18. 10. We read of *Joſiah* and the people with him making a Covenant before the Lord, 2 *Chr.* 34. 31, 32. This was the ſame for ſubſtance with that of *Aſa*'s forementioned. The ſame we have *Ezra* 10. 3. 16. *Nehemiah* took an Oath of the people to put away their exactions. *Alſo I ſhook my Lap, and ſaid, So God ſhake out every Man from his Houſe, and from his labour, that performeth not this promiſe, even thus be he ſhaken out and emptied, Nehem.* 5. 12, 13. All the Lords people entred into a Curſe, and into an Oath, to walk in Gods Law, &c. *Nehem.* 9. 38. *Nehem.* 10. 29.

I forbear to cite any more Old Teſtament proofs under this Argument. I ſhall come to the New Teſtament. And firſt we have our bleſſed Saviour in the Book of *John* more than twenty times uſing the words, *Verily Verily.* I ſhall not contend that theſe are an Oath. And no Man will deny but they are a great deal more than a bare or ſimple affirmation. I have before cited *Paul* in many places, either ſwearing, as moſt think, or very near to ſwearing, as all think, as when he ſaith, *I call God for a record upon my Soul, As the truth of Chriſt is in me, Behold before God I lye not.* And for the practice of the New Teſtament times it is beyond all doubt that ſwearing was in uſe among the *Jews* and all about them, and accounted lawful. Some take it to be an adjuration when *Paul* ſaith, *I charge you by the Lord, that this Epiſtle be read unto all the holy Brethren,* 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 27. So alſo 1 *Tim.* 5. 21. and 2 *Tim.* 4. 1. But moſt expreſly we have an holy Angel lifting up his hand to Heaven, and ſwearing *by him that liveth for ever and ever, Rev.* 10. 5, 6. Compared with *Dan.* 12. 7. And for concluſion of this Argument let it be noted what St. *Paul* or who ever was the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews,* 6. 16. ſaith, *Men verily ſwear by the greater,* he ſpeaks here of ſwearing as in ordinary and common uſe, both then and in all ages of the World; and he doth not tax it of any vice or harm, but mentions it as an allowable practice, no Man

queſtioning it; and ſhewing the End and Inſtitution of an Oath, to be for confirmation and the ending of ſtrife; and ſo God himſelf that he might give to his people fulleſt grounds of conſolation, confirmed his Promiſe by an Oath. By all which it is evident that at all times and in all places by good and choiceſt Men, ſwearing hath been in uſe, and accounted moſt ſacred, and the practice thereof in weighty caſes never queſtioned.

*Arg.* 4. The Spirit of God in Scripture doth approve of ſwearing, as *Pſ.* 15. 4. It is one note of a Citizen of Heaven, *he ſweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. Pſ.* 63. 11. *The King ſhall rejoice in God, every one that ſweareth by him ſhall glory. Jer.* 4. 2. *Thou ſhalt ſwear the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteouſneſs, and the Nations ſhall bleſs themſelves in him, and in him ſhall they glory.* And ſo evident is the Spirits Teſtimony to the Oaths and ſwearing of the Saints formentioned, that it cannot be denyed: As that of *Abraham*, *Iſaack*, *Jacob* and *Joſeph*, *David* in the Book of *Pſalms*, when he ſware to *Saul*, and to *Bathſheba*, and the Oath between him and *Jonathan*, the Oath of King *Aſa* and his People, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, and the Angel in *Rev.* all theſe have the ſtamp of the Spirits approbation upon them, and nothing of blot or impurity is charged on them, nor can be as to the matter of ſwearing. And we are commanded to be followers and imitators of the Saints, that is, in good and harmleſs actions, *Heb.* 6. 12. And Saint *Paul* ſaith, *Thoſe things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and ſeen in me, do; and the God of Peace ſhall be with you, Phil.* 4. 9. And it cannot be gainſaid that Saint *Paul*'s ſpeeches, ſome of them, are either Oaths, or ſo near to ſwearing, that it is hard to ſay what difference there is between an Oath and them. And the ſtamp of God's approbation is upon them, and they are part of Scripture, and commended to the Saints and Churches for laudable and godly imitation.

*Arg.* 5. I ſhall offer this Argument againſt Quakeriſm in the matter of Oaths. If it be wholly ſinful to take an Oath, then there is no ſuch ſin as perjury and being forſworn. But perjury remains a ſin to this day, and one of the moſt horrid ſins, againſt the light of Nature, a moſt Conſcience-waſting ſin, 1 *Tim.* 1. 9, 10. The Law is made for perjured Perſons. As there is a difference between a ſimple promiſe, or affirmation, Yea and Nay, and an Oath; ſo there is a difference between lying and perjury. Every promiſe or affirmation is not an Oath; but every Oath is an affirmation or negation, aſſertory or promiſſory,

miſſory, and more: And by analogy every falſe Oath is a lye, but every lye is not perjury or a falſe Oath. The Holy Ghoſt doth diſtinguiſh them, *Prov.* 6. 16, 17, 18, 19. and 1 *Tim.* 1. 10. *Cæteris paribus*, perjury is a groſſer ſin than ſimple lying. Every Mans Conſcience will aſſent to that. Perjury is accounted a moſt hainous ſin by all Mankind. Scripture is full of Inſtances of God's vengeance upon perjured Perſons. Seldome do ſuch Perſons go unpuniſhed in this Life. Read Gods terrible Curſe againſt ſuch, *Zech.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Mal.* 3. 5. And God's puniſhment upon the King of *Judah* for breaking Oath and Covenant with the King of *Babylon*, *Ezek.* 17. 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, &c. compar'd with 2 *King.* 24. 20. And God's puniſhment upon *Iſrael* in King *David*'s time with three years Famine, forementioned, for breaking Oath with the *Gibeonites*, it being an Oath lying upon all the Nation from *Joſhuah*'s time. King *Herod* had ſuch reverence of an Oath, that rather than break it he would, and did, murther *John* the *Baptiſt*.

I cannot ſee how this Arguiment can be avoided. For, as if there be no truth-ſpeaking, there can be no lying: ſo if there be no oathing or ſwearing, there can be no forſwearing, or falſe-ſwearing. *Rectum eſt index ſui & obliqui:* A crooked Line doth ſuppoſe and denote that there is a ſtraight Line, from which the crooked is a deflection, or elſe it could not be known. Sin is nothing but a ſwerving from the Rule, or a tranſgreſſion of the Law. Now we are certain that there is ſuch a ſin as Perjury diſtinct from all other ſins. I would know what Law or Rule Perjury or falſe-ſwearing is a breach of? The Ninth Commandment is, *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs.* And another Commandment is, *Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf.* Theſe are Prohibitions. Now every Prohibition is a Law, and every Law is the Law-makers Will appointing and commanding what to be done, and what not to be done; and whatſoever be named, both are included. When the Law ſaith, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf, there is included of neceſſity this Precept, Thou ſhalt at all times, when thou ſweareſt, ſwear the very truth. He that forbiddeth Drunkenneſs, commandeth Sobriety. He that forbiddeth Adultery, commandeth Chaſtity. If there be no Vice, there is no Vertue. For Vice is nothing elſe but a contrariety to Vertue, as Sin is to Duty. It is true, I grant, that if there be no perjury there may yet remain lying. But there is beſides lying, ſuch a Sin as perjury, whoſe definition is diverſe from that of lying, whoſe malignity and guilt is far more hainous, whoſe puniſh-

ment is greater, and every Mans Conſcience that is not quite void of feeling doth dread perjury far more.

This ſhall ſuffice for poſitive proof. I ſhall make the Point more clear by invalidating the contrary proofs and reaſons as I find them largely ſet down in a pompous Treatiſe of Oaths, ſubſcribed by 13 principal Quakers, and compoſed by *William Pen* and *Richard Richardſon*, preſented to the King and Parliament, and Printed 1675. I ſhall not think my ſelf bound to anſwer to every word there ſaid, nor to tranſcribe their words and arguments at large. I ſhall do their Cauſe right, and not conceal one jot that I know is of any force againſt oath-taking and ſwearing. This Treatiſe conſiſts of ten diſtinct Reaſons, and abundance of Citations and Allegations out of ancient and modern Writers of all ſorts, for which reaſon I count it a pompous Treatiſe, as being ſet off with a great many names, and making a fair flouriſh. I muſt acquaint the Reader that there are many Fathers cited in that Treatiſe of great name and eminency in the Church of God, whoſe learning and holineſs none doth queſtion: but whether the Citations be true or not I am not able to examine, wanting the Authors themſelves, and not able to furniſh my ſelf with them. And I am loth to overload this ſmall defence of Oaths, being under neceſſity to be as brief as I can; and it is Scripture and Reaſon which doth moſt weigh with me, and the beſt weapons of defence that I have: and therefore ſaving all due reverence to all ſuch names as be of note and eminency in that Treatiſe, I ſhall ſay nothing to the Argument from Authority, though as ſmall as my reading is, and as poor as my Library is, and it is the leaſt and loweſt of all Mr. *Baxter*'s three ſorts ſet down in his *Chriſtian Directory*, I could make a ſhift to furniſh ſome Pages with Authorities and Citations, both out of Chriſtian and Pagan Writers, in defence of Oaths and ſwearing, in ſuch caſes as hath been accuſtomed by the People of God in all Ages of the World. But the ſubſtance and ſinews of the Book lies within the ten Reaſons againſt oath-taking. One of the ten Reaſons is only againſt the particular form of ſwearing uſed by us in *England*, I will forbear to ſpeak of that. Of all the other nine Reaſons there is but one that is of any weight; but what will make againſt ſwearing at any time as well as ſwearing under the Goſpel.

Their firſt Reaſon againſt Oaths is from the cauſe and grounds of Oaths, which, ſay they, is perfidiouſneſs, diſtruſt, and falſhood; theſe brought in ſwearing. Theſe being gone there will need no Oaths.

*Ceſſante*

*Ceſſante ratione legis, ceſſat lex*: They preſume, that none will deny, and take it for granted that ſwearing came in, and therefore ought to go out, with perfidiouſneſs. The Quakers declare that they hate lying as much as perjury, and can no more tell an untruth, than forſwear themſelves, *Treatiſe of Oaths, p.* 11, 12, 13.

For Anſwer to this, Either this Reaſon utterly makes againſt the Quakers denyal of Oaths, or elſe it utterly makes againſt all the Oaths that ever have been in the World, both by God and Man. If the Reaſons of an Oath be perpetual, ſince the fall, as much now as ever, then we may retort their own words upon them, the reaſon of ſwearing being permanent and continuing, the Law for ſwearing is ſtill in force. Whatſoever was a juſt ground and reaſon of ſwearing, the ſame is at this day. An Oath ever was, and ſo remains for confirmation, and among Men ſerves for the ending of all ſtrife. This reaſon of an Oath is ſtill on foot: if it was lawful to ſwear anciently upon theſe grounds, why not now?

Why did God himſelf ſwear to Jeſus Chriſt, to *Noah* and all the World never to deſtroy it by Water again; to *Abraham*, to *David*, to Saints and Sinners up and down the Scripture? Why did all the forementioned godly Perſons in the Old Teſtament, and *Paul* and the holy Angel ſwear in the New? Was perfidiouſneſs, and diſtruſt, the cauſe? Either it was a juſt ground of ſwearing or not: if it was, then there being the like diſtruſt in the World as was then, ſwearing is as lawful now as then: if it was not a juſt cauſe, then God himſelf and the holy Angel and all the choiceſt Saints in Scripture did evil in ſwearing and bringing in Oaths cauſeleſly.

Their ſecond Reaſon is muchwhat the ſame with this, and partly leans upon it. We dare not ſwear, ſay the Quakers, becauſe we dare not lye. For us to ſwear is to do a needleſs thing, or to ſuſpect our own honeſty. The former is to take Gods Name in vain, the later is to diſtruſt our ſelves, which we have no reaſon to do. Should we ſwear we ſhould ſubject the truth to Mens humours, and no difference would appear between honeſty and perfidiouſneſs, *p* 13, 14.

May I not in Anſwer hereto ask the Quakers, Are you holier than God? are you more to be truſted than the Lord? Or are you more honeſt than *Abraham* and *Iſaack*, and *Jacob*, and *Joſeph*? are you more perfect than *David* and *Jonathan*, and the choiceſt Saints of God in Scripture? Do not this your Reaſon charge either God or you moſt deeply? You ſay you dare not ſwear, becauſe you dare not lye.

Might

Might not God ſay this much more than you? Might not all the holy Men in Scripture, forementioned, ſay it as well as you? Either we muſt charge you with great pride in thinking to be more holy and pure than God himſelf, to ſay nothing of his primeſt Saints in this World: or we muſt ſay that this your Reaſon againſt Oaths is moſt vain and impious, and a charging of God with doing a needleſs thing, and ſuſpecting himſelf of falſhood. Rather I ſhould think the contrary to your reaſoning to be moſt ſound and proper. We cannot lye, and therefore we cannot poſſibly forſwear. Such as cannot lye are the fitteſt and meeteſt Perſons to ſwear, of all other. A Lyar will hardly be believed upon his Oath. An honeſt Mans word is more to be truſted than the Oath of a fraudulent perfidious and ſelf-ſeeking Knave. If an honeſt Man declare a thing *ex animo*, his bare affirmation carries great credit with it: but if he ſhall confirm it by Oath, who doubts it then? This Reaſon doth much reflect upon God, and accuſeth him either of doing a needleſs thing in all the Oaths Recorded of God in Scripture, or of ſuſpecting himſelf of iniquity and deceit: alſo it chargeth all his Saints forementioned, whoſe honeſty and piety may well compare with the Quakers.

Their third Reaſon againſt ſwearing is, they fear, leſt by complying we ſhould be guilty of Rebellion againſt the diſcoveries God hath made to our Souls of his ancient way of truth, and conſequently of concealing his goodneſs to us. We ſhould deprive God of his glory, and the World of great benefit, ſhould we comply with Oaths. God only hath begot this conſcientiouſneſs in us, and we dare not put this Light under a Buſhel, *p.* 15.

Still this Reaſon alſo reflecteth upon God, and accuſeth God to himſelf by his Laws and Practice, and by the Practice of all his Saints and Churches approving ſwearing; and the Quakers make it part of their conſcientiouſneſs to be againſt all ſwearing, and ſay that God hath begotten this tenderneſs in them. But by this we know that the Light you pretend to is Darkneſs, and the things which you entitle God to are your errours, and the ancient way of truth is for Oaths and ſwearing. Your Light and Conſcience agreeth not with the Practice of God himſelf, his holy Angels, his choiceſt Saints, and all his Churches both old and new. Ceaſe to Father your errours upon God, and call not blindneſs and miſtake, right conſcientiouſneſs; for God owneth none ſuch. We know you are miſtaken.

Their fourth Reaſon is, That the preſent Age is exceedingly debauched.

bauched. Oaths have loſt their ancient force. We would prove to ſo falſe an Age that there is a People who are ſo far from vain and falſe ſwearing, that they dare not ſwear the truth, but their *Yea* and *Nay* ſhall out-weigh other Mens Oaths, and that with a free offer of ſuſtaining double puniſhment, in caſe of miſcarriage. This only Reaſon, ſay they, were we deſtitute of all other allegations would be a ſtrong diſſwaſive from ſwearing, *p.* 15, 16.

You do well to have good conceits of your ſelves, and cenſure others. It is the Hypocrites mark to eſpye a Mote in anothers Eye, and not perceive a Beam in his own. But why have Oaths loſt their ancient force? Are there no honeſt People in all the World but Quakers? If there be any, why may not an Oath have an awe upon them? but if none be honeſt but Quakers, why may not an Oath have an awful influence upon you? You grant that at the firſt inſtitution Oaths had a great awe upon Mens Conſciences: If then Mens Conſciences, yours, or others be good and tender, by your own conceſſions ſwearing cannot but have a mighty awe upon you and them. But you are ſo far from vain and falſe-ſwearing, that you dare not ſwear truth; and this you account your praiſe and perfection above all others. But why then did God ſwear? why did he command ſwearing of old? why did his Angels ſwear, and his holieſt Saints? If you condemn us, will you alſo ſay that all theſe were debauched, and had no reverence of an Oath? Becauſe there is great exceſs in Meat and Drink, will you therefore, to cure the Malady of the times, have all People utterly to forbear all eating and drinking? Becauſe there is great exceſs in Apparel, will you have us all to go naked? But this is an old trick of Satan's to cry down God's Holineſs and Rules, as not holy and ſtrait enough: and to invent a holineſs and ſtrictneſs of our own, ſeemingly, ſtricter than Gods; when indeed it is but the invention of pride and a fleſhly mind, and a device of Satan transforming himſelf into an Angel of Light, under pretence of zeal and holineſs, bringing in ſenſuality and ſelf-exalting, Monkiſh Righteouſneſs. We deſire all People to take warning by your falls. You are far gone which write at this rate.

Their fifth Reaſon is from God's Omnipreſence. This, they ſay, rightly underſtood, makes againſt ſwearing, *p.* 16.

Had you ſaid againſt vain and falſe-ſwearing, it had been a good Argument. But this Reaſon doth equally hold againſt all ſwearing at any time, and ſo you run into all the forementioned evils. You charge

charge God himself, his Saints, his Angels, all the famous recorded Oaths in Scripture. God was always omnipresent, and this is one Reason for swearing: for hereby we appeal to God as present and seeing our hearts and knowing all our secrets.

Their sixth Reason against Oaths is, That God doth not concurr in Oaths; if the swearer swear falsly God doth not convince others by his vengeance upon the perjured party: and if he swear truly, God doth not by any aid on his part or any countenance, such as the party for his true Testimony deserveth, manifest any liking of the Oath. An evident sign, say they, that God approveth not of any such Oaths and Imprecations, *p.* 17.

By this it should seem you grant, that if God did apparently give blessing to upright swearing, and revenge perjury, at least wise so as to convince others, that then Oaths were lawful. Certainly God is the revenger of all sin, and the rewarder of all uprightness. Will you teach God how to reward and punish? Must it be an Argument against swearing, because God doth not presently and forthwith smite every perjured person with sudden death, or some eminent and conspicuous judgment as he did *Ananias* and *Sapphira*? or that he doth not accept and approve upright swearing, because he doth not make the same evident to our eyes and senses by signal manifestations? What is become of your great Principle of the Light within, which, you say, convinceth of all sin and duty? Suppose a perjured person prosper in this World, and such as swear truly prosper not outwardly; will you therefore inferr that perjury is good, and godly upright swearing rejected of God? We are to believe more than we yet see. And we are sure and certain that God will revenge all false Oaths, and reward all such as swear uprightly. This is certain as if we saw it. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. I may retort this Argument upon your selves, thus, Swearing must needs be lawful, because God hath never to this day suffer'd perjury to go unrevenged: nor true and upright swearing to go unrewarded. Read *Zech.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Zech.* 8. 16, 17. *Mal.* 3. 5. *Ps.* 15. 4. *Ps.* 63. 11. *Pro.* 6. 16, 17, 18, 19. *Pro.* 19. 5, 9. *Pro.* 21. 28. If sin be the greatest of evils, then it is its own great punishment; and consequently, should God forbear to punish a perjured person in this Life farther than by his sin, and the fearedness, guilt, and remorse of his Conscience, he would have little cause to boast, or think himself to have escaped all punishment. Sin and guilt now lying upon the Conscience, and Hell after all, what think

think you by this puniſhment? And on the other ſide, on the behalf of the upright ſwearer; is it no reward to have a good Conſcience, to be innocent, to have truth in the inward parts known to God, though others do not? A good Conſcience now, and Heaven after all, is the reward of all ſuch as ſwear in uprightneſs. If God revenge all Perjury, he will be ſure to bleſs all upright ſwearing. Deny it if you can, and do your beſt to evade this Argument. Go to any forſworn Perſon in all the World, and ask him if he do not repent him of his Sin, and have not ſomething of God's condemning ſentence already upon his Soul, and is convicted by his own Conſcience, and would fain get looſe from his Conſcience if he could. Is not this a proof that God is the deteſter and revenger of all perjury? If it be not to others, doubtleſs it is to him, and an unanſwerable Argument for Oaths; for by this, as by a Seal or palpable Teſtimony and moſt convincing to the Conſcience, God doth give witneſs for himſelf that he cannot endure falſe Oaths; and if he cannot endure falſe Oaths, will it not follow that he highly loveth true Oaths, and will never fail to bleſs all ſuch? Five Sins, ſaith a godly Divine of our own, do very rarely go unpuniſhed during this Life, but ſooner or later God's vengeance doth overtake them; Murder, perſecuting God's People, Sacriledge, Perjury, and Rebellion againſt Parents. If we had no Scripture, there is a great deal in the Providence of God, and in the Conſciences of all the World, to prove the lawfulneſs of an Oath and ſwearing, and the greatneſs of the ſin of Perjury, and the vengeance which hangs over all forſworn Perſons, your own Reaſons and Arguments are Truth's beſt Weapons againſt your ſelf and your Cauſe.

Their ſeventh Reaſon againſt Oaths is, That it is a preſumptuous tempting of God to ſummon him as a Witneſs, not only to our batten, but trivial buſineſſes, too low for an earthly Prince to attend. *p.* 17. It is vain and inſolent to think that a Man when he pleaſeth can make the great God a Witneſs or a Judge in any matter, to appear by ſome ſignal approbation in judgment, to help or forſake him, as the truth or falſeneſs of his Oath requires, when he ſaith, *So help me God.*

*Anſw.* We reject all vain and uſeleſs, as well as falſe, Oaths. We defend no Oaths, but ſuch as be neceſſary and weighty, ſuch as God by Scripture-Laws anciently allowed and preſcribed, ſuch as the choiceſt Saints in Scripture have practiſed, and in conſimilar weighty caſes having like Reaſons. God is preſent and witneſs to all we think and ſay and do; and we cannot if we would exclude or hinder him

from being the ſupreme Judge and Witneſs of all our wayes. When we ſwear, we do not ſummon in God for a witneſs. We do invoke his Name, and atteſt his truth and preſence, and appeal to his all-ſeeing and moſt righteous Eye. If this be to ſummon God as a witneſs, we yield it, and defend it to be lawful and godly, and far from tempting God, or doing affront to his Highneſs. For we do it with religious regulated fear, *Eccl.* 9. 2. This Reaſon makes as much againſt ſwearing before Chriſt's time as ſince, and both alike. When we ſay, *So help me God*, we do not tye or limit God to appear by any ſignal appearance in judgment for manifeſtation of the Oath whether true or falſe; if true, forthwith to reward it; if falſe, to revenge it by ſome new and uncouth way. Conſcience under God is Gods great Witneſs, Judge, Rewarder, and Tormentor. The greateſt rewards and puniſhments are reſerved to another World. Chriſtians know and believe this. God is free to reward or puniſh as he ſees meet: but it cannot be, that for every Sin God ſhould preſently ſmite the Sinner, no nor for every groſs Sin, with preſent death, or ſome ſuch great puniſhment. He might if he would. We deſerve it. But his wiſdome and clemency will not, and ſhould it be, the World would ſoon be at an end, many of thoſe that now be in Heaven would have been in Hell, and much of Gods glory would have been obſcured. It is ſufficient that all, ſooner or later, ſhall have according to their doings, and that ſome be made Examples for warning to the reſt; and that God do ſometimes go out of his common and ordinary Road in more conſpicuous and ſtrange and extraordinary mercies and judgments, rewards and puniſhments, for the better guard and ſecurity of his Laws, the preventing of ſin, the awakening and ſtartling of the dull and ſluggiſh and ſecure, the preſervation of his ordinary works in eſteem, the encouragement of the Saints, and the admiration and praiſe of his glorious and dreadful name, by all and in all.

The eighth Reaſon is not againſt ſwearing it ſelf, but againſt our form and cuſtome of ſwearing, by a Book, laying on of the hand, kiſſing it, *&c. p.* 18. This I ſhall paſs by.

The ninth Reaſon is the only ſeeming weighty Reaſon. Were the Oath the moſt inoffenſively form'd, we have both the Example and Precept of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt againſt ſwearing, never that we read of uſing any further aſſeveration than what in *Engliſh* amounts to *Verily, Verily*; *truly truly*, *Mat.* 5. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. *Pag.* 19. Chriſt, ſay the Quakers, gave forth more excellent Precepts

cepts than thoſe under the Law, and that the *Jews* were permitted ſwearing in the ſame ſenſe as they were permitted divorce, for the hardneſs of their hearts, and that Chriſt took away the liberty of divorce ſaving in caſe of Fornication; but did utterly take away all ſwearing, becauſe it was of evil. And they cite Biſhop *Sanderſon de Juram. p.* 141. That it was not needful that Chriſt ſhould forbid what was forbidden in it ſelf, or was always unlawful; which vain ſwearing was, and is, by the third Commandment, *p.* 19, 20.

Chriſt, ſay they, makes thoſe Oaths unlawful now which were lawful under the Law, and expounds himſelf, *Mat.* 23. And they alledge *Jam.* 5. as concurrent herewith, *p.* 21, 22. But their main Reaſon againſt all ſwearing, they ſay, is from thoſe words of Chriſt, *Let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil, p.* 23. Whence they infer that every Oath being more than yea, and nay, cometh of evil.

Yea, and nay, ſay they, cannot be intended of juſt the ſame words, and no more, nor no other; provided they are not of a higher ſtrain, but of the ſame degree of ſpeech, importing a plain aſſertion or denyal of a thing. *p.* 24. Say they, ſuch is the advance from *Moſes* to Chriſt, *Jew* to Chriſtian, that as the Chriſtian needs not the *Jews* curb, ſo his lye is greater than the *Jews* perjury; becauſe his *yea* and *nay* ought to be of more value than the *Jews* Oath. And *p.* 11. God diſpenſed with ſwearing by his Name to his People of *Iſrael*, that he might take them off from ſwearing by falſe Gods. So that ſwearing is only better than Idolatry. And *p.* 151. What God diſpenſed with under the Law he reſolved to remove under the Goſpel, and to wind up things to a higher pitch of truth and righteouſneſs, from Adultery in the act, to Adultery in the thought; from revenge, to ſufferance; from true ſwearing to no ſwearing at all. This is their *Achilles*, and this one Argument containing in it Chriſt's words, and *James*'s, which ſeemingly forbid all ſwearing, is the only thing of weight that I know can be alledged againſt ſwearing.

For anſwer hereto let us, 1. Suppoſe theſe words not writ and made known, and that the Goſpel had neither Chriſt's, nor *James*'s words; then ſure Quakers, and all, would allow Oaths to be lawful. It will then follow, that to all ſuch as theſe words have not come, nor rational means afforded for the conveyance of them, to all ſuch ſwearing is lawful.

2. That it is not Chriſt's intent, nor *James*'s, to prohibit all ſwear-

ing I ſhall evidence by theſe Reaſons. 1. Great caution is to be uſed in the expounding of Scripture. God forbid we ſhould wrong any honeſt Mans words, and take them in a wrong ſenſe: how much more the Word of God and Jeſus Chriſt? ſince alſo the danger is ſo great, and a heavy Curſe is pronounced againſt all that ſhall add to, or take from, the words of God and Chriſt ſet down in Scripture. Words do but expreſs the Speakers mind. Therefore in expounding Scripture we are to do our beſt to ſift out what might be the true meaning of the Lord by theſe words. Chriſt ſaith, *I am the Door of the Sheep, I am the Vine and my Father is the Husband-man*; we will not therefore ſay that Chriſt is literally a Door, a Vine. Chriſt ſaith in this fifth of *Mat. If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out: if thy right hand offend thee cut it off.* Shall we therefore every time we offend with our eye and hand, pluck out the one and cut off the other; ſuppoſing we could do ſo, which can be but once ſo done? Mortifie thy luſt, and ſpare thy eye and hand, ſave in a caſe of extraordinary and moſt rare neceſſity ſeldome or never falling out. So Chriſt might ſay, *Swear not at all*, and yet not intend the abrogation of all Oaths. He ſaith elſe-where, *Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow turn not thou away.* Yet may I not give to every one that asketh me: he may ask what I have not, he may ask an unreaſonable requeſt: nor am I bound to lend to all that would borrow. Conſcience and diſcretion forbid it in many caſes. We are therefore not to wreſt our Saviour's meaning.

2. That which the Quakers take hold of in Chriſt's words as making moſt againſt all ſwearing, in my apprehenſion makes moſtly for all due and regular godly ſwearing.--- *Let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; for whatſoever is more than theſe, cometh of evil.* Whence it ſeems plain that Chriſt doth not condemn any Oath as evil and unlawful, which was not ſo before his ſpeaking of thoſe words; and that he doth not ſo much conſtitute a new Law not in force before, but doth expound the old. And yet admitting Chriſt in this caſe to make no new duty nor conſtitute no new ſin, but to give a true Expoſition of the Law already extant and in force; yet may Chriſt's Expoſition be counted for a Law, though that Law might be in force before. For Chriſt is both God and Man, and he is not a bare Expoſitor of the Law, but a Law-maker alſo; and the words as coming from his Mouth are a Law, though alſo there might be the ſame Law generally or expreſly, written in Scripture, or contained in Nature, already and long before on foot in the World. 1 *Joh.* 2. 7, 8. *I write no new Command-*

*Commandment unto you, but an old Commandment which ye had from the beginning. Again, a new Commandment I write unto you.* Christ's words may be both an Expoſition and a Law, alſo they may be a new Law; and yet but the Law which was old, and from the beginning, new publiſhed by him. And we cannot conſtrue the meaning of Chriſt to be any other without unſufferable miſchiefs to follow.

1. If Chriſt forbid all Oaths, as evil, and declare and pronounce all Oaths to come from evil; then I do not ſee how he himſelf can eſcape being judged of evil. For Chriſt is God, and the Old Teſtament abounds with Oaths of God; and if all Oaths be evil, then God's Oaths are; and ſo Chriſt condemns himſelf, and all the Trinity, of evil. For, every Perſon in the Trinity is God. We muſt never admit that Conſtruction which maketh God himſelf the moſt offending Party, who hath both ſworn himſelf frequently, and long before *Moſes*'s time taught his Saints and worſhippers the nature, uſe, and conveniency of an Oath; and to this day hath born teſtimony and approbation to all juſt and upright ſwearing, and deteſted, and revenged all perjury.

2. Who dare ſay, or will expound, the Oaths of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, and *Joſeph* before the Law, to be evil, and come from evil? by what Reaſon, or Law, will they judge them to be evil? There was then no written Law. The Law, or Light, of Nature ſanctified and made holy did not then, nor doth now, judge them to be evil; nor doth any godly Man ſo judge. Who will ſay that the Oath of King *Aſa* and his People performed with all their heart, and with great joy, God teſtifying his approbation and good liking of it, was evil? 2 *Chr.* 15. 12, 13, 14, 15. The ſame I ſay of the Oaths of *Nehemiah*, *Ezra*, and the returned Captives; as alſo the Angel, *Dan.* 12. and the expreſs Oath of the Angel, *Rev.* 10. long after Chriſt's words. Certainly he ſhould much wrong Chriſt's words, that ſhould ſay theſe Oaths are evil. The ſame alſo I may ſay of the Oath between *Jonathan* and *David*; and the Oath mentioned *Pſ.* 119. and *Pſ.* 132. Chriſt without all doubt never meant to condemn all theſe Oaths as evil, and ſo to abrogate them.

3. If we ſhall take Chriſt's words utterly to forbid every thing more than yea and nay, and above bare and ſimple affirming and denying, then Chriſt himſelf is condemned for mentioning ſo often *Verily, Verily*; and *Paul* is condemned for ſaying, *I proteſt, and I call God for a record upon my Soul, and as the truth of Chriſt is in me*; and many more

more ſuch ſpeeches before cited. And then alſo it is utterly unlawful ſo much as to ſay, ſurely, of a truth, truly, and the like. For it is evident that all theſe, the leaſt and loweſt of them, are more than bare yea and nay, or a ſimple affirming or denyal. If you will have every thing ſinful which is above ſimple yea-ing and nay-ing, then the moſt uſual and harmleſs Phraſes being a ſtep or degree above yea and nay in confirmation cannot be uſed: and ſo Quakers themſelves will be found as guilty as any.

Obj. *What needed Chriſt to forbid that which was forbidden before, and to command that which was commanded before?*

*Anſw.* 1. What was forbidden and what was commanded, or what was ſin and duty before, might not be ſo clearly expreſſed, ſo plainly delivered, and pronounced in ſo many words, and it might be requiſite to have the thing plainly expreſſed.

2. The Doctrine of Oaths might be much corrupted, and he might reform it from all the errours and corrupt traditions of the Scribes and Phariſees, and others; and ſo much the Goſpel ſeems to intimate and hold forth.

3. It is no unuſual thing for Scripture to write and repeat the ſame things, commands, duties, errours, ſins, over and over again.

4. Why may you not by the ſame Reaſon condemn the greateſt part of Scripture, and the writing of it? For was there not ſin and duty in the World before *Moſes*'s beginning to write the Scriptures? was it therefore uſeleſs to have written Laws and Traditions?

5. There might be groſs diſorders and corruptions in Mens Lives in the matter of ſwearing, and Chriſt might ſee it good to expreſs himſelf thus againſt ſwearing, to reform the evil Oaths and Cuſtomes of ſwearing which might then abound. Vain and prophane ſwearing is but too common a ſin in all places at all times.

6. Chriſt himſelf was the great Light of the World, the great Prophet and Teacher ſent from God; who was to be Law-giver and Saviour to the World, Superiour to *Moſes* and all that went before him, and Maſter and King to all that came after him, the deſire of all Nations, the Head of the Body his Church, and therefore he might well publiſh Laws with his own Mouth, and Chriſten old Duties with his new Name, and point all Perſons to himſelf the great Reconciler and Peace-maker to the World, and ſo he might put a new ſtamp upon Duties, adding his Authority as new, being only foretold before, but now exhibited in Fleſh, and Perſonally appearing in the World, to

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put away Sin, and bring in everlasting Righteousness, and renew the World with the light of the glory of God in the Incarnation, Conversation, Doctrine, Miracles, Passion, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

7. Never before was there such a Person and Teacher in the World. Christ excelled all that went before him, and therefore with good reason might he renew old Precepts, and partly confirm them, partly explain them, partly apply and press them, and partly divulge and publish them, and grave his own Seal of Authority upon them as most eminent and far excelling all other. For God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, *&c. Heb.* 1. 1, 2.

Obj. *But swearing was but a thing permitted for hardness of heart, as was divorce. And Christ took it quite away as a piece of sin and imperfection not to be tolerated in his Kingdom of perfecter light and purity.*

*Answ.* 1. Prove what you say, and answer all Objections, and carry the Cause. 2. Divorce came in with *Moses*'s Law; but swearing was in use long before. 3. God himself is the Pattern of swearing, and hath hallowed it as most sacred by his Example. 4. No such Reasons can be rendred for the adnulling of Oaths and swearing, as may be for divorce. 5. God was the God of the *Jews* then, as well as of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* now. There was holiness and uprightness and true godliness in the World before Christ appeared in the Flesh. They had the Gospel as well as we, *Heb.* 4. 2. The Gospel was preached to *Abraham*, *Gal.* 3. 8. And he was counted the Father of all them which believe, *Rom.* 4. 11. And to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God was ever the duty of Man, *Mic.* 6. 8. 6. Compare Old Testament-Laws with the new, and the imparity will not be found so great. Though there was much ceremony and sacrificing and outward service and rites and ordinances and much more outward cost under the Law than now, and more temporal promises; and the Gospel and eternal Life, and spiritual priviledges and promises not so clear and bright under the Law, as since; yet then, and always, God did prefer Mercy before Sacrifice; and Obedience before the fat of Rams. He was always a lover of holiness and purity and justice and temperance and goodness and whatsoever was praise-worthy. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength, and thy Neighbour as thy self, was God's Law then.

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Man was always God's Creature, and intended for the ſervice and glory of his Maker, and framed for Eternity, and bound by the unalterable Laws of God in Nature to be holy in all manner of Converſation, and to be ſelf-denying and obedient to God in all things; and as God's Creature to depend wholly upon him, and to be to his entire ſervice and praiſe. 7. And compare Old Teſtament Saints and Chriſtians with thoſe of the new: and ſaving that great grace was poured forth upon the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians and Goſpel-Churches, to be for a ſpecimen or pattern to ſucceeding times, and to allure and bring in Proſelytes, and ſpread and diſperſe the Chriſtian name and glory, and ſhew forth Chriſtianity to the height, and for all the excellency and eminency of Chriſt's ſpirit in many, and moſt, of the Martyrs, there have been as famous and renowned Old Teſtament Chriſtians as have been ever ſince, and they are a great ſhame to us. *Abel*, *Noah*, *Enoch*, *Abraham*, and his Son and Grandſons, *Moſes*, *Aaron*, *Joſhua*, *David*, *Job*, *Ezra*, *Simeon*, and all the Prophets and Multitudes both of Men and Women were burning and ſhining Lights, far excelling the common pitch of moſt Chriſtians now adays. I will not deny but that there may be ſomething in the ſpirit of Chriſt ſince his appearance, reſurrection, and aſcenſion into glory peculiar to the times ſince, which the Saints of old had not in ſuch peculiarity: the Goſpel ſeems to add a ſpecial tincture of Love and a heavenly ſpirit, and minding ſpiritual and inviſible everlaſting riches and glory. But we may think there was ſomething peculiar to thoſe times and the ſpirit of the Goſpel then, which we have not. They were the elder Brother, and the Lot of the Firſt-born was theirs; and he conferred an abundant meaſure of his ſpirit upon many of them. O what a ſpirit of holineſs, purity, wiſdome, ſimplicity, and energy was in the Prophets and Pen-men of Scripture! What Divinity and Sublimity and Life and Spirit runs through all the Veins of the Old Teſtament, eſpecially ſome more noble and excellent parts of it! And I am ſure there were no works of Supererogation then. They did not any of them go above their Rule. Oaths and ſwearing were no part of their imperfection, nor any ſuch defilements as to be excluded Chriſt's Kingdom under the Goſpel.

Purity in thoughts and words and looks and geſtures was commanded and practiſed under the Old Teſtament as well as under the New. It is not true that Jeſus Chriſt advanced Chriſtian Doctrine from not Adultery in the act, to not Adultery in the thought, from revenge

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to ſufferance. For it was true of old, as well as now, what *Paul* ſaith of the Law, *Rom.* 7. The Law is holy and ſpiritual, and the Commandment is holy and juſt and good. And *Job* ſays of himſelf, *I made a Covenant with mine eyes, why then ſhould I look upon a Maid? If my heart hath been deceived by a Woman, if my ſtep hath turned out of the way, and mine heart hath walked after mine eyes; and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands, Job* 31. 1, 7, 9. *David* prayes, *Pſ.* 119. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.* And all the Old Teſtament-Laws do forbid ſin in thought. *Jer.* 4. 14. *Pſ.* 119. 113. And as for ſuffering wrongs, and carriage towards Enemies, who a more eminent Pattern, ſaving Chriſt himſelf, than *David*? *Pſ.* 35. 12, 13, 14. Who more eminent for meekneſs than *Moſes*? *Numb.* 12. What honourable encomiums and praiſes doth the Scripture make of Old Teſtament-Saints? *Heb.* 11. O what Patterns of imitation are they to us! Would God we were like them: though we are not to imitate them in any of their recorded blots or frailties. But this point of Oaths I never underſtood to be any blot at all in them. Nor is there any thing at all in the Scripture-Text, or in the Reaſon and Law of God upon Mans Soul leading us to any ſuch Expoſition. But the Holy Ghoſt hath plainly given his approbation thereto, and right informed reaſon doth readily aſſent to it.

But this brings me to their laſt Reaſon, which is; that ſwearing is forbidden by the very Nature of Chriſtianity it ſelf, and is unworthy of him that is the Author of it, *p.* 24, 25, 26, 27. It is, they ſay, a ſhameful thing to pretend to be a follower of Chriſt, and yet ſo far to degenerate from the imitation of him, as to need to ſwearing, and uſe Oaths and aſſeverations diſpenſed with in weakeſt times of knowledge, and never known to ancient *Jews* and Chriſtians.

This is anſwered before. This Reaſon chargeth God himſelf, and his holieſt Servants. What ſay you, if God himſelf hath ſworn ſo often, how comes ſwearing and Chriſtianity to be ſo contrary? How come holy Angels and choiceſt Saints to ſwear, and how comes it to paſs that the Author of Chriſtianity, or godlineſs, commanded and preſcribed it to his People of old? Was not the Religion of the Old Teſtament through Faith in God, and in the promiſed *Meſſiah*, able to make wiſe unto ſalvation? You cannot deny but that an Oath was part of the Religion and Chriſtianity then: and if Chriſtianity then and now, for ſubſtance, be one and the ſame, it is a ſhameful thing in you to charge the Lord himſelf, and his holy Laws, and moſt emi-

nent Servants, with degeneration and ſhame for authorizing and approving Oaths.

I ſhall for a concluſion manage one Argument for ſwearing from the Quakers own Principles. They do evidently contradict their own great Principle, which is, that every Man hath a Light within; which Light is the ſupreme Rule, as being more ancient than the Scriptures. That which was the Rule in the Patriarchs time before *Moſes* began to write the Scriptures, that they would have to be the Rule; they call all to this. Now if this muſt be the Rule and Judge of Oaths, then clearly ſwearing is lawful and yet in force, and the Quaker is not conſiſtent to his own Principles. For, before any Scripture was writ, ſwearing was in uſe, and in great eſteem, both by Pagans and Proſelytes, by good and bad; and never at all controverted in thoſe firſt Ages. So that I do not ſee how they can reconcile themſelves to themſelves.

Alſo they tell us (Treatiſe of Oaths, *p.* 9, 10.) of a time of primitive Integrity when truth flowed naturally, and needed no ſuch expedient as an Oath, yea and nay was then enough. But when Men grew corrupt, they diſtruſted each other, and had recourſe to Oaths as a remedy againſt falſeneſs.

We would know what time this was when truth flowed ſo naturally from Men. Poets tell us of a golden Age wherein truth and juſtice and every precious thing among Men did abound. But we know it to be a meer Fiction of Poets, and no ſuch thing ever was in the World ſince the fall of *Adam*. He indeed during his ſtanding in innocency was repleat with truth and all graces and vertues: but his ſtanding was but a while, there was at this time but one Man and one Woman. There was little uſe for Oaths during that ſhort ſpace: and yet I have made appear that during their ſtate of innocency the wiſe Creator uſed at leaſt an aſſeveration to them. There was more than yea and nay in innocency. Since the fall of Man, if we may uſe the Poet's words,—*Terras Aſtræa reliquit*. The Iron Age begun with the fall. *Cain* murders *Abel*, and the whole World is divided into two great Ranks or Seeds; the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent. In a ſhort time the World was grown ſo full of ſin, that it repented the Lord that he had made Man, and it grieved him at the heart, and he was conſtrain'd to deſtroy the World by Water. And ever ſince all manner of wickedneſs hath been in the world, and prevailed more by

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ſar than honeſty and godlineſs. Multitudes go in the broad way, but few in the ſtrait Path of holineſs. If you know any ſuch Age of the World when the People and Inhabitants of the World were all ſo innocent, and wholly given to truth, that they needed no Oaths and ſwearing, nor any more than yea and nay, and truth flowed naturally from them, you muſt bring us ſome ſuch Records as yet have not been known or heard of in the World. For Scripture tells us no ſuch thing, but rather quite the contrary. What have you more to ſay againſt ſwearing and oath-taking? If I knew it, and it were worth the while and pains to examine it, or if I could think of any thing material to be objected againſt ſwearing, I ſhould not ſtick to bring it forth, and render the truth yet brighter by anſwering all that can be alledged againſt it.

Some perhaps will begin to think that I am a looſe Man who write in defence of Oaths, when the Land mourns becauſe of Oaths; and there is more need to write againſt Perjury and falſe Oaths, and vain and prophane and uſeleſs ſwearing, with which too many in this preſent Age are laden. But as I am no Friend to any unlawful and falſe Oaths, ſo when I can apprehend my ſelf duly called to it, I ſhall by Gods grace be ready to bear my Teſtimony againſt the Generation of wicked ſwearers, who profane the Name of God, and tranſgreſs the Rules of right allowable ſwearing.

There is but one thing more that I can think of needful to be added to this defence of Oaths, and that is in what caſes it may be lawful to ſwear. But this is too large a Field to go over. Conſult the Scriptures, and obſerve in what points and caſes the People of God have uſed to ſwear; and in what caſes the Lord of old preſcribed to his People the uſe of an Oath for ending of ſtrife-matters. The matter ſworn muſt be lawful, you muſt underſtand what you ſwear, you muſt mean as you ſpeak, and abhor all deceit, ſecret meanings, and mental reſervations and under-hand conſtructions, and ſwear as if the heart-ſearching God ſtood before your Eyes, or as if you were to die with the Oath in your hand, and ſtood before Gods Judgment Seat. Swear nothing which you would not ſwear if any impartial and right underſtanding godly Perſon, one or more ſtood by, and ſhould look you in the Face, and ſay, Friend take heed what you do. Remember that the great and principal Oath of all is the Oath of Allegiance to the King of Heaven. By Baptiſm you enter into the Lords Oath or Co-

venant, and become vowed and devoted to God; and if you keep not this ſincerely you are no leſs than forſworn, and will ſurely periſh. Baptiſm is not a Ceremony or Complement, but a binding ſacred Vow: this Vow is renewed at the Lords Supper: all profeſſing Chriſtians are under this Vow, and engaged in Covenant to the Lord; and thence Baptiſm and the Lords Supper are called Sacraments, alluding to the *Sacramentum militare*. Chriſtianity is ſo far from being againſt Oaths and ſwearing, that no Man can be counted a Chriſtian externally, that is not externally devoted and ſworn to God and Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt by Chriſtian Profeſſion: and no Man can be a ſincere Chriſtian that is not ſincerely vowed and Covenanted to God, againſt the World, the Fleſh and the Devil. So that all Hypocrites, and unſound Chriſtians, and meer worldly Profeſſors are no better than perjured and forſworn: and this is the higheſt, and greateſt, and moſt damning Perjury: all that profeſs Chriſtianity and are not ſincere, are falſe to their Profeſſion. And their very Profeſſion doth contain, vertually and in eſſence, an Oath or Covenant to be the Lords, and the ſerioueſt and moſt ſolemn and binding Covenant that can be in this World; Read *Deut.* 29. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, *&c.* All other Oaths, Vows, Engagements, and Covenants of what nature ſoever, publick, private, civil, eccleſiaſtical; aſſertory, promiſſory, among Chriſtians are all ſubordinate to this great and principal Vow or Covenant, and are all vertually contained in it: this is the Life of all. This is all particular and leſſer Vows, Oaths, and Covenants in one, as that which conſtitutes us Chriſtians before God, and is the bottome and baſis of all ſaving religion, truth, and uprightneſs towards God and Man; and which being right and ſincere, giveth right to everlaſting glory, and is our greateſt mercy and bleſſing in this World, next to Heaven it ſelf. If any one ſhall impugn the lawfulneſs of an Oath and ſwearing, let him know that he doth but blindly and ignorantly ſet himſelf to undermine Chriſtianity and the ſaving Religion of Jeſus Chriſt. For, what is an Oath but the greateſt Teſtimony that Man can bear to any thing he affirms or denies, or promiſeth to do or forbear? It is nothing elſe but the higheſt and ſtrongeſt aſſurance that can be given of the truth in Caſes of Teſtimony, depending upon the credit and veracity of him that ſwears. Now, are not all Men bound thus to aſſure, devote, and make over themſelves unto God? What is a Chriſtian but one that is devoted and conſecrated to God ſolemn-

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tually? All the eſſentials of an Oath are contained in the
n Covenant. I grant this Covenant may be done more fo-
and expreſly: but it is an Oath or Covenant when it contain-
ll eſſentials. As when I ſay, I profeſs my ſelf a Chriſtian and Ser-
t of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, againſt Satan, the World,
and Sin; and renouncing all things inconſiſtent with true faith and holineſs and the hope of eternal glory, I betake me to the only true God in Jeſus Chriſt as my Portion according to his holy Will and Laws ſincerely for ever. This is an Oath or Covenant to God, and ſo called frequently in Scripture, it being eſſentially the higheſt engagement that a Soul can make of it ſelf to God, and is only wanting in ſome leſſer matters to denominate it moſt ſolemn and explicite ſwearing or vowing to God.

I forgot to make ſpecial obſervation of one thing before, and that was, that in ſeveral Scriptures of the Old Teſtament there are Promiſes or Prophecies of Oaths to be under the Goſpel, relating to the Ages after Chriſt, as that every Knee ſhall bow, and every Tongue ſhall ſwear and confeſs to Chriſt; all which are exactly fulfilled, it being made apparent that ſo many ſincere Chriſtians as there have been, and are and ſhall be, in the World, there are ſo many covenanted, devoted and ſworn ſincere Servants to God.

All therefore that name the Name of Chriſt, and do not depart from iniquity, muſt wear upon them the Brand of Perjury. Let Quakers be warned to repent them of all their abuſive Doctrine againſt Oaths, and Fathering their errours upon God. Let them not think, that when they ſuffer for refuſing lawful Oaths cuſtomably taken by godly Minds and pure informed Conſciences, they ſuffer in righteouſneſs, except they will call that righteouſneſs which is cauſed by errour and blind miſtaken zeal. I do from my heart pity them, and deſire no rigour may be done to them in the leaſt; and that ſo far as it may conſiſt with the intereſt of Chriſtianity, the peace of the Church, and the publick weal of the Nation, all clemency and toleration be ſhewed them in the matter of Oaths; and, if it can be, that ſome expedient may be found out for their eaſe in this Point, to ſuch eſpecially as do erre ignorantly and well meaningly. The Lord ſhew compaſſion to theſe poor blind Souls. Forbear, ye ſimple Souls, to kick againſt the Pricks. Draw nigh to God, and to his Word, and to his faithful Miniſters; and God will draw nigh to you.

I had

I had thought to have added a Defence of our Form and M of ſwearing uſed in *England*, by laying the hand upon the and kiſſing it, and ſaying, *So help me God.* But upon further ſideration I determined to let that paſs. Whoever hath a n. may ſee it fully and accurately argued and defended, by Mr. *Baxte.* in his *Chriſtian Directory*, *p.* 416. Indeed I had thought to have craved leave of him to have tranſcribed it out of his Book, and annexed it to this Defence of Oaths and ſwearing, that it might be in more hands, and of more general uſe. But without his leave I would not do it. I have made this Tract longer than I would, though a great deal is left out that might have been added; becauſe I would not burden the Reader, and lengthen Controverſies.

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*F I N I S.*

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